COMMENTARY

FOCUS: BUDGET POLITICS

Budget plan makes Clinton a 'less of the same Democrat'

MONA CHAREN

Why does President Clinton want to be re-elected?

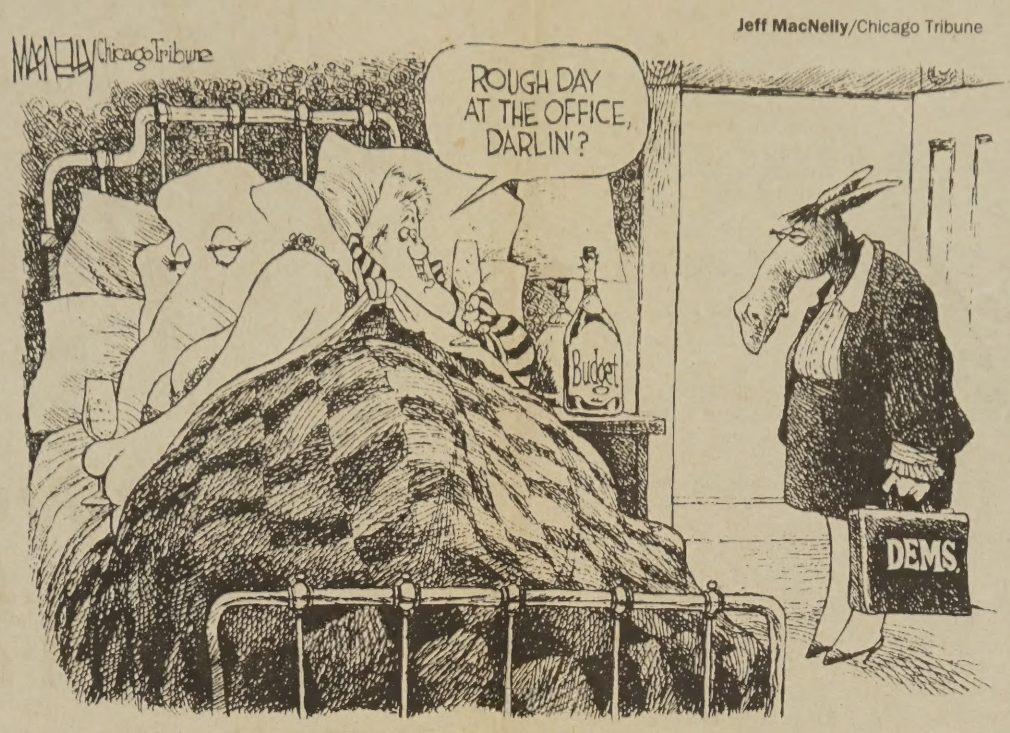
It's not entirely a frivolous question. His speech last week endorsing a balanced budget was on the order of Julia Child backing the Pritikin Diet. He has surrendered his sword, admitted defeat and, if you believe the grumblings of some Democrats on Capitol Hill, gone over to the enemy.

For by acknowledging that the budget can be brought into balance without inflicting terrible hardship on the American people, the president has relinquished the last, best argument against Republican governance. By saying that he too would balance the budget — though in 10 years instead of 7 — he is essentially making a bid to become a "less of the same Democrat."

Only eight years ago, when I began my career as a columnist, I chided then-presidential candidate George Bush for being a "less of the same Republican." We've forgotten, in the afterglow of Lee Atwater's tactics, how the 1988 campaign began. It began with Vice President Bush pretty much endorsing every goal Michael Dukakis listed for his administration. Education? Bush would be the "education president." Day care? Bush was for it. Environment? Bush would care about that, too. For the first months of the national campaign, before Atwater worked his magic, George Bush's message was that he was for everything the Democrats were for, only less so.

With President Clinton's endorsement of the balanced budget, we have come full circle. It is now the Democratic president who is for everything the Republicans favor, only less so.

Some of my colleagues in the pundit business are saying that Bill Clinton has finally reached his philosophical destination — that this is what he really believes in. I doubt it. It's awfully hard to know what this president really believes in.



Jeff MacNelly/Chicago Tribune

In 1992, he could have campaigned only against George Bush. He didn't choose to do that. Instead, he took on the entire Reagan legacy, railing against the "greed" of the 1980s and condemning (mythical) cuts in favored programs. He promised, if elected, to "invest" in the American people. It was a new word for a venerable Democratic practice. Reagan called it tax and spend.

Indeed, one of President Clinton's first acts was to propose a stimulus package spending $16 billion. A lot of that money consisted of a wish list by big-city mayors.

Though the president styled himself a New Democrat, and talked a good game about reinventing government, in fact, he has never gotten over his passion to spend taxpayers' money. He talked rapturously during the campaign of 1992 about building a "high speed rail" system for the United States and about investing in high technology. Both were silly ideas. The United States is too large to make high speed rail practical. And it is nonsense to suppose that Washington bureaucrats would be better judges of which high technology stocks are worthy of investment than private industry.

But now the president has bowed to the electorate and recognized, finally, that the voters were not saying in 1994 what the president first thought — that they wanted more Clintonism faster. They want a balanced budget, and the president has acknowledged their wishes.

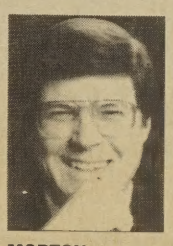
The president's thinking appears to be this: 1) The voters want smaller government and more local government; 2) they also like divided government; 3) I can position myself as the brake on Republican excesses.

Will it work? I don't think so. If the 1996 presidential race were only about budgets, spending and taxes, then perhaps the strategy would succeed. But I believe that while those issues are quite important to voters, the electorate is also extremely worried about social and cultural questions. And on those issues, the president is firmly and irremediably out of step with the national mood.

When people vote for a president, they are choosing a national symbol in addition to a chief executive. Dwight D. Eisenhower was able to win easily while the Congress was controlled by the Democrats because his stature as national hero made him fit the image people desired for a president. This president, for reasons ranging from Whitewater to Joycelyn Elders, from Paula Jones to his appearances on "Larry King," suffers from a stature gap.

Charen is a syndicated columnist.

Clinton wise to distance himself from his party's old thinking



MORTON KONDRACKE

Though he's being clobbered for it by fellow Democrats, President Clinton showed leadership in proposing an alternative budget, assuming that he sticks to his new convictions when deciding whether to sign or veto Republican legislation.

Democrats fear — and many Republicans hope — that Clinton was just caving in to pressure once again in shifting his budget strategy from one of letting the GOP proceed on its own to offering an administration compromise.

Partisans on both sides likened Clinton's action to George Bush's agreement in 1990 to consider "revenues" as part of a budget agreement, in violation of his "no new taxes" pledge.

As one House GOP leadership aide put it, "He blinked. The debate is going to be conducted on our terms now, on how to balance the budget without raising taxes. How can the Democrats accuse us of 'cutting' Medicare if the president says he wants to 'limit its growth'? That's our argument."

Traditionalist Democrats concurred in this logic, some sulfurously, some resignedly. "Over the last few weeks, we were getting through with the argument that the Republicans were extreme," one moderate House Member said. "Now we're undercut."

But Clinton's action does give him one asset that he didn't have before: a public benchmark to use in justifying vetoes if Republicans pass legislation he doesn't like.

Clinton's new budget is dramatically different from the Republicans' and can be defended philosophically: The president is offering no tax cuts to the wealthy, he is protecting education and training programs the GOP would gut, and he is cutting Medicare and Medicaid by a lot less than the GOP proposes.

What's more, Clinton has revived health care reform as a means of achieving the Medicare and Medicaid cuts without, administration officials say, affecting individual benefits or quality of service.

Clinton would have been wise to come up with such a program when he presented his 1996 budget in February. It would have put him on record as a budget-balancer at the outset of debate and would have given him a credibility he now is having trouble recouping.

> Now, Clinton needs to sell his budget alternative to the public and make it clear that he's willing to use his veto to enforce it — even if, in October, Republicans dare him to a game of "chicken" over the budget and the debt ceiling.

Now, he appears a late and unwilling arrival to the balanced budget idea, egged on by the GOP and opinion polls.

At a minimum, Clinton should have produced a budget that showed declining deficits in order to demonstrate that his hard-fought 1993 deficit-reduction package was part of a long-term strategy.

Unfortunately, Clinton was waylaid by political considerations — a desire to make Republicans suffer the consequences either of failing to deliver on their promises to balance the budget or of slashing so deeply that they offended masses of voters.

This tactic was gleefully taken up by most congressional Democrats, who have failed to offer any alternative programs of their own — except for a Senate welfare plan derived from Clinton's — and seemingly expected Clinton never to offer any, either.

Congressional Democrats now are furious that Clinton has abandoned the sit-and-wait tactic. House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., is blaming the switch on his rival for future dominance of the party, Vice President Al Gore, and Gore indeed was one of those who pushed Clinton to switch.

But White House aides say that Clinton concluded that he simply could not continue to "say no" to GOP proposals without a full-blown alternative, as congressional Democrats might be able to do.

Now, Clinton needs to sell his budget alternative to the public and make it clear that he's willing to use his veto to enforce it — even if, in October, Republicans dare him to a game of "chicken" over the budget and the debt ceiling. Failure to pass those bills could shut down the federal government.

It's possible that Clinton, by moving to the center on the budget, has permanently lost the allegiance of a number of Democratic liberals who wanted him to defend Medicare under all circumstances.

That's OK. Clinton probably is a better prospect for re-election in 1996 if he separates himself from the "old" Democratic thinking that dominates Congress and follows a "new Democrat" strategy of moderate government downsizing.

Everything depends, however, on Clinton's being able to demonstrate sustained conviction. Right now, that's in doubt.

Kondracke is executive editor of Roll Call, the newspaper of Capitol Hill.

FORUM

Citizens Project defends civil rights while celebrating our diversity

By **Richard Skorman**

Once again Citizens Project is the subject of many letters to the editor. Several people (Sally Pearcy, Chuck Goodin, James Solis and Kevin Tebedo) replied to a forum piece written by Citizens project board member Greg Walta ("Let's do unto others . . ."). In different ways, all of these people were attempting to redefine Citizens Project.

Just what is Citizens Project and why does it seem so ill-defined to some and so threatening to others?

Citizens Project is an organization that is driven by a set of principles, rather than by specific issues. Our mission is to uphold the "traditional American values of pluralism, freedom of religion and separation of church and state." Our vision is of "a community committed to working beyond ignorance, prejudice and fear, where differences are respected, individual rights are protected and diversity is celebrated."

All of the work we do, all of the issues we support, are determined by this mission and vision.

To some letter writers, however, we are a "hateful, divisive" group that directly or indirectly supports all kinds of destructive behavior including shootings, beatings, drug use, theft, pedophilia, high school sex and public homosexual solicitation in Palmer Park. These accusations hurt. We are grateful to have this opportunity to set the record straight.

Diverse is a better adjective than divisive to describe Citizens Project. Some of us are deeply religious; others are not. Some of us are Republicans; others are Democrats or Independents. Many of us support strong sex education in the public schools; others do not. Many of us believe that homosexuality is a natural and immutable variation of human sexuality; others believe it is a choice or a sin.

What binds us together is our respect for pluralism, our commitment to dialogue and our resistance to those who would impose one viewpoint on all.

While we know that most readers of the GT are reasoned individuals of good faith, we feel compelled to answer several recent charges specifically.

1) Citizens Project is not hostile to religion. In fact, Citizens Project adamantly supports everyone's right to hold their own religious beliefs and to practice their faith without interference from government or from those who hold different beliefs. While we understand that proselytizing is a tenet of some faiths, we reject the viewpoint of those who insist that anyone who does not believe as they do is suspect, amoral or inferior.

> "What binds us together is our respect for pluralism, our commitment to dialogue and our resistance to those who would impose one viewpoint on all."

And we resist attempts to force specific religious beliefs on others. For example, we oppose the teaching of creationism as science in public schools, but support public schools teaching about religions. We oppose organized prayer in public schools so that children of minority faiths will not feel coerced or compelled to pray outside their faiths, but support the rights of individual students to express their faith personally.

2) Citizens Project does not promote "hateful, divisive, virulent talk." Citizens Project believes in rational discussion, not angry confrontation. Toward this end, we have sponsored dozens of Dialogue Dinners to bring orthodox and progressive members of our community together to discuss their different views.

And no, we don't support condom-throwing. For the record, at the time of the incident at Village Seven Presbyterian Church we issued a statement condemning it, just as we condemn the aggressive and confrontational tactics of Operation Rescue.

3) Citizens Project is not intolerant of those with opposing beliefs. Citizens Project strongly supports everyone's First Amendment right to state their views and to advocate for their positions in the political forum. We may oppose political positions or methods, based upon our mission, but we certainly support the equal rights of all to vigorous, civil public debate. Tolerance does not mean "anything goes," nor does it mean that positions should not be taken. It does mean treating others fairly.

Further, as in the diabolical portrayals of Citizens Project, the nature of opposition is often exaggerated. There are many areas of morality where we and all people agree, whatever their faith or political orientation (e.g., theft and pedophilia). However, there are other areas where people of strong moral conviction and good conscience can and do disagree.

Citizens Project believes that we can create community — by recognizing our common moral base and by talking about, understanding and working reasonably with our differences.

In correcting misconceptions and distortions, Kevin Tebedo's forum piece on June 1 deserves special attention. First, we agree that Citizens Project is not neutral — we believe in and advocate for our mission. But Tebedo alleges that our views cannot produce a tolerant society, and offers as proof four examples of what he claims we believe. Unfortunately, these examples range from misleading to slanderous. None reflect our actual positions.

Tebedo argues that because Citizens Project opposed Amendment 2, we want to "force all segments of society to accept homosexuality as proper, good and beneficial for America and Colorado." His statement has nothing to do with our opposition to Amendment 2.

In opposing Amendment 2 we believe that people should have equal access to protection from discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. We view equal access as a fundamental, not a special, right, and see Amendment 2 as preventing one group from having the access that the rest of us enjoy. And, Mr. Tebedo, the fact that Greg Walta and others may believe that homosexuality is a sin has nothing to do with their opposition to discrimination.

Tebedo's assertion that Citizens Project "tolerates the kind of (sexual) behavior going on in Palmer Park" is simply ridiculous. For the record, Citizens Project thinks sexual activity in public is inappropriate and that public decency laws should be strictly enforced in our city's parks. Tebedo's allegation can be taken in the same vein that we take his revisionist accounts of Nazi violence during the Holocaust ("Homosexuality inspired the ruthlessness of the entire (Nazi) regime," CFV Report, April 1995). These outrageous distortions have no place in a rational discussion of opposing viewpoints.

The question of "false witness" also brings us to the issue of human relations. Tebedo states that "Citizens Project called the Federal Civil Rights Division in Denver and filed a complaint against Colorado Springs for gross civil-rights violations . . ." This is a total fabrication. After we read this charge, we made some calls. No such office even exists. The closest agency we could find in Denver was the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights — a research agency. They do not take complaints and they had never heard of Citizens Project. We invite Tebedo to help us put this nasty rumor to rest.

Citizens Project does strongly support the efforts of the Colorado Springs Community Initiative to advance human relations in Colorado Springs. We have never stated that we desired "an empowered, enforcement-capable, commission to have the power of subpoena." This appears to be another calculated invention by Tebedo.

Tebedo thinks that Citizens Project "declarations of tolerance and diversity come to an abrupt halt when it comes to Colorado for Family Values," and that Citizens Project thinks CFV "should have no say when it comes to setting the agenda for Colorado Springs." While we appreciate Tebedo's acknowledgment that CFV has an agenda, we must again disagree with his statements about us. We support CFV's right to state its views and to advocate for its positions. We cannot "welcome with open arms" blatant misstatements of fears as fact, for among the values we hold dear are honesty and integrity.

Citizens Project welcomes rational, respectful discussion of the many difficult issues facing our community. We are quite proud of our contributions to this end in our short, three-year existence. We strongly believe that community forged out of understanding and tolerance will be better and stronger for its diversity. We also believe that fears, stereotypes and misinformed exaggerations (yes, held by many of us, regardless of our views) must be challenged if we are to create a city in which widely held values and civility prevail. We invite the above-mentioned letter writers to join us in this process.

Skorman is a local businessman and a board member of Citizens Project.

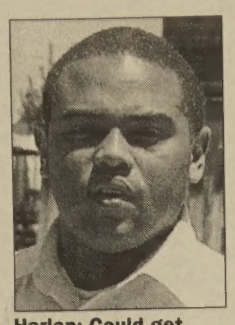
STATE

Man quickly convicted of murdering waitress

Associated Press

BRIGHTON — An Adams County District Court jury took just over two hours on Tuesday to convict Robert Harlan of the kidnapping and murder of Rhonda Maloney.

Harlan, the son of a Denver police detective, now faces a death-sentence trial, in which the jury will decide whether Harlan should be executed or given a life sentence.



Harlan: Could get death penalty in woman's slaying.

Harlan has admitted assaulting and killing Maloney on Feb. 12, 1994. But his attorney, Bryan Shaha, argued that Harlan acted impulsively after Maloney failed to pay him for illegal drugs.

Assistant Adams County District Attorney Steve Bernard told the jurors in closing arguments that Harlan knew what he was doing and was in control when the crimes occurred.

Maloney, a 25-year-old cocktail waitress, was returning from work in Central City when authorities say her vehicle was run off Interstate 25 in the metropolitan area.

Maloney was sexually assaulted but escaped and flagged down motorist Jaquie Creazzo. They were en route to a nearby police department when a pursuing gunman fired at her vehicle, paralyzing Creazzo. The car came to rest outside the Thornton Police Department.

Harlan pulled Maloney from Creazzo's vehicle and fled the area. Authorities allege he killed her near Interstate 70 and Smith Road, washed away the blood at a nearby car wash and then dumped her body under a bridge in Adams County.

Peace activists booted off base during protest

Associated Press

AURORA — A Colorado Springs group of peace activists protesting secret Air Force satellite missions were wrestled to the ground Monday, handcuffed by Buckley Air National Guard security officers and driven from the base.

"They had no authorization to be on the base," according to guard spokesman Maj. Michael Yowell, who said some of the six protesters had to be forced to the ground and handcuffed before being escorted off the base.

Citizens for Peace in Space has protested at Buckley off and on for a couple of years, objecting to the secrecy of the Air Force's satellite missions there.

The Air Force's 2nd Space Warning Squadron and the Data Facility, which download information from spy satellites, are located at Buckley.

Peace activists say information gathered at Buckley is used by the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office and the National Security Agency.

The protest began with speeches and a song at 7:30 a.m.. Then six of 24 protesters headed onto the base, passing the main gate on East Sixth Avenue.

They were stopped by Air Force security police, put into vehicles and driven back outside.

The six were barred from the base. They are Donna Johnson, Mary Sheetz, Peter Sprunger-Froese and Bill Sulzman, all of Colorado Springs; and Mag and Ken Seaman of Denver.

Group seeks way to keep Fitzsimons commissary open

Associated Press

AURORA — The Defense Commissary Agency is examining the possibility of keeping Fitzsimons Army Medical Center's grocery and merchandise stores open if the hospital is closed.

The Defense Commissary Agency would consider the plan if at least 500 active-duty military members are within a 25-mile radius of the post.

"We may be able to operate something in a reduced capacity at Fitzsimons," said Capt. Rene Stockwell, a spokeswoman at the Army/Air Force Exchange Service, which operates the post exchange at Fitzsimons.

There is precedent for such an arrangement, but it would require an act of Congress, she said.

The Base Closure and Realignment Commission is expected to decide next week whether to close the 49-year-old Fitzsimons.

Fitzsimons commander Brig. Gen. John Parker has said the commissary and post exchange likely would close two years before the hospital.

The exchange service, a military organization, provides low-cost merchandise to active duty personnel, Reserves, National Guard members, military retirees and their families. It operates on funds generated from sales, not taxes.

It's Official
The Cat's Out of the Bag!
Saturday, July 1st

Gazette Telegraph
BEST OF THE '95 Springs

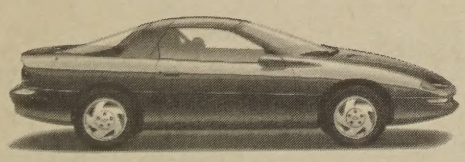
SHOWCASING the *BEST* in ENTERTAINMENT, DINING & LIFESTYLE

Hundreds have voted in the BOS Reader Poll.
Everyone is awaiting the results!
Get Your Copy.

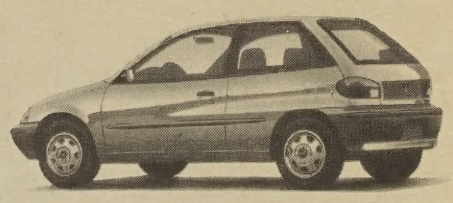
Thursday, June 22

COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE TELEGRAPH
The newspaper that lives here.

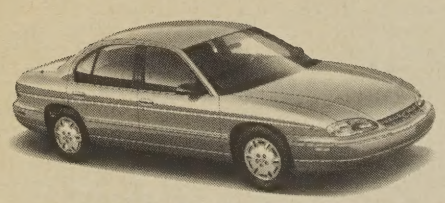
You *KNOW* Where Chevys Cost Less!



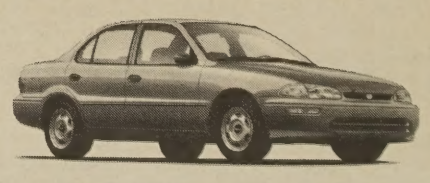
1995 CHEVY CAMARO COUPE
Dual Air Bags, ABS, 3.4 Liter, Auto, A/C, Cass, P. Locks/Win, Cruise, Tilt #S2781
$16,386



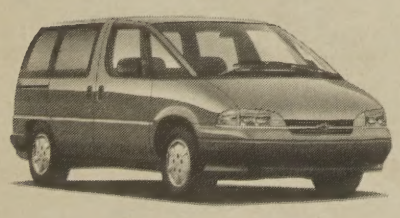
1995 GEO METRO H/B
Dual Air Bags, 5 Sp, Bucket Seats, Daytime Running Lights #S2752
$7,799
(Rear Window Defogger)



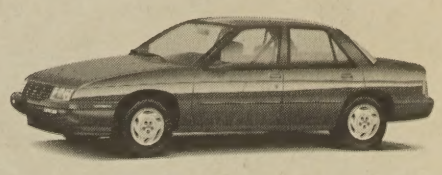
1995 CHEVY LUMINA 4 DOOR
Dual Air Bags, ABS, 6 Cyl., Auto, Tilt, P.Locks, Cruise, A/C #S3263
$15,343



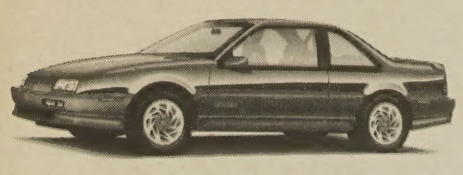
1995 GEO PRIZM 4 DOOR
Dual Air Bags, ABS, 4 Cyl., 5 Sp, A/C, Stereo, Power Steering #S3055
$13,764



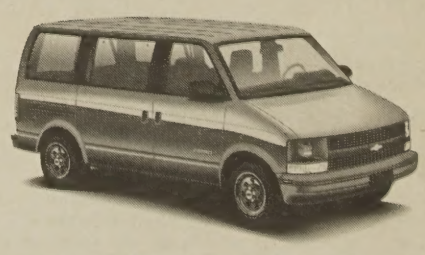
1995 CHEVY LUMINA MINIVAN
Driverl Air Bag, ABS, 3.8 Liter, Auto, A/C, Cass, P. Locks/Win, Tilt, Cruise #S2652
$19,328



1995 CHEVY CORSICA 4 DOOR
Driver Air Bag, ABS, 6 Cyl., Auto, A/C, Cassette, Cruise, Tilt #S3194
$14,884



1995 CHEVY BERETTA COUPE
Driver Air Bag, ABS, 6 Cyl., Auto, P. Windows, P. Locks, Cruise, Tilt, A/C #S3038
$15,930



1995 CHEVY ASTRO PASS VAN
Driver Air Bag, ABS, 4.3 Liter, Auto, A/C, P. Locks/Win, Tilt, Cruise #S3046
$19,892

All prices include rebates, if any. All vehicles are subject to prior sales and sales tax.

Immediate delivery with approved credit!

DANIELS DOWNTOWN
CHEVROLET GEO
Downtown — Weber at Kiowa — 632-5591